

HOOSIER WOMEN AT WORK

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Queer Notes in the Circle City: Women, Work, and the Archives

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Musicians. Educators. Companions. Spectral figures in the archives. "Queer Notes" examines the lives of two women, whose work, artistry, and emotional existences were intertwined for over five decades, Gertrude Carpenter (1890-1968) and Jane Bauer (1889-1989). After serving as USO entertainers in a YMCA canteen in England, the pair settled in the Circle City in the 1920s where they worked as music educators at the Orchard School. "Queer Notes" is the result of a historical accident, a chance encounter with their disassembled photo album. The photos are a glorious montage of outings with friends, vacations, garden walks, school performances, and of course images of the pair. This paper focuses on these images and centers them as the photos of holidays, cars, performances, friends, and one another create a pastiche, aesthetic of queer domesticity. This paper considers the alterity of queerness that shapes the historicization of the pair and contemplates how music and music education provided not only a vocational focus but also a liminal space in which the pair forged a queer life in Indianapolis and beyond.

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